

DHSS Announces First Coronavirus-Related Death of Resident from 24/7 Facilities

SMYRNA (April 16, 2020) – The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) is announcing the first death from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) of a resident at one its 24/7 facilities.

A 57-year-old male resident of Governor Bacon Health Center in Delaware City died April 14 at a New Castle County hospital. He was the only resident who had tested positive at the long-term facility; eight staff at Governor Bacon also have tested positive.

In Kent County, two residents and two staff at Delaware Hospital for the Chronically Ill in Smyrna have tested positive. The residents from DHCI are hospitalized; the staff members from both facilities are self-isolating at their homes.

“We are heartbroken for the resident who lost his life to COVID-19,” said DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker, a practicing family physician. “This man’s death makes it even clearer to all of us just how vulnerable the residents of our 24/7 facilities are, as well as residents in private long-term care facilities up and down our state. Our Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities is working closely with our sister agencies, the Division of Public Health and the Division of Health Care Quality, to ensure that the health and safety of our residents and staff continue to be our highest priority.”

Delaware Psychiatric Center, DHSS’ 24/7 psychiatric hospital near New Castle, has 12 lab-confirmed cases among patients and six positive cases among staff.

DHSS' Division of Health Care Quality (DHCQ) is working closely with DHSS' 24/7 facilities and private long-term care and other licensed facilities in the state to verify that there are strong screening, infection control and isolation measure in place at each facility, and if, not, to assist them in implementing stronger protocols.

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The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of life of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations.